



**Governor's Proposed Budget FY16-FY17  
Appropriations Hearing  
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services  
Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

Senator Bye, Senator Kane, Representative Walker, Representative Ziobron, and Members of the Committee, thank you for hearing my testimony today on the important investments through the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to support efforts to end homelessness in CT.

I am the Executive Director of Journey Home, a nonprofit working in Greater Hartford to end homelessness. Journey Home coordinates the Greater Hartford Coordinated Access Network, which is a group of shelter, housing, healthcare, and service agencies working together to improve access to shelter and housing for those facing homelessness. Although there is a long road ahead to end all homelessness, we are very close to demonstrating to the rest of the country that this state can end chronic homelessness, meaning those who have disabilities and have been living on the streets or in shelters for more than 12 months in the past few years. We are on track to finish the job this year, but we must have the continued support services from DMHAS, or all of this work that we have been doing for so many years, will be at risk of failure. This is a social problem that has plagued our country, our legal system, our healthcare systems, our neighborhoods for decades, and we are very close to proving that with the right level of coordination, services, and housing, this is a solvable problem, and it will save our state millions of dollars. We know that those who suffer in chronic homelessness have a strong tendency to cycle in and out of our public systems – emergency services, hospitals, and jails – incurring steep costs to those systems without resolving the underlying homelessness.

Since we implemented the Coordinated Access Network and started tracking data locally a year ago, we have seen a 40% decrease in chronic homelessness in Greater Hartford. One of the key ingredients that has made this progress possible is the services. There are lots of housing programs out there, but those with case management services included have the highest success rates. Out of more than 100 chronically homeless people in Greater Hartford who have been housed in permanent supportive housing since last March, only two have lost their housing and returned to shelter. That is a 98% success rate. The services funded by DMHAS are so essential to the success of these individuals, because they can be transformative. Help us finish the job of ending chronic homelessness this year and prevent chronic homelessness from ever happening again.

Thank you for hearing my testimony and thank you for your support to end homelessness in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

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